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- I. Part of two Letters from Mr Edward Lhwyd, Keeper of the Ashmolean Repository in Oxford, to Mr Samuel Dale of Braintree in Essex, concerning Fossils.

Oxford, Sept. 19. 1701.

**T**He state of these Bodies is quite different in your parts from what it is in *Wales* and *Ireland*. In those Countries the Shells are generally *Crystalline*, but with you (and sometimes hereabouts) they are *testaceous*: Which difference is doubtless to be attributed to the Soil, and particularly to your Chalk and Flint, which all those Countries want, excepting a small part (I know not by what chance of *Diluvian Dissolution*) got into the *North* part of *Ireland*. But there 'tis remarkable that their Chalk is absolutely petrify'd: I mean, whereas the Flints are here imbodyed in Chalk, they are there in a Chalk-white *Lime-stone*. And as your Chalky Countries only afford those *Echinitæ* I have stil'd, *Pileatus*, *Galeatus*, and *Cordatus*: So I could never find them in all my Travels but at that place; from whence in the time of *Paganism* the *Druids* procur'd them, and sold them amongst our *Northern Britains* for Stones of Miraculous efficacy against perils by Fire and Water; perswading the Vulgar they were generated in *Cocks-knees*; as Thousands in the *High-Lands* believe at this day. And one Fellow had the Impudence to tell me (finding me a little hard of belief) that he himself had taken one (that his Master had shew'd me) out of a *Cocks knee* with his own hand. —

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Oxford, Nov. 10. 1701.

— WE were surpriz'd here, to find so many *Fossils*, scarce distinguishable from *Sea Shells* : for, as I mention'd before to you, the case is otherwise in those places I searched. We have indeed in these Parts one or two *Fossil Shells* of a *Testaceous* substance ; but in colour they recede farther from those of the Sea than yours. I find by those sent me, that you sometimes find them imbedded in solid Stone : Which takes off any objection some might offer, of their being an accidental scattering of *Gulls, Crows, &c.* on the *Harwich Cliffs*.

Looking upon this occasion into *Cambden's Britannia*, I find in the last Edition a Note concerning a *Petrifying Spring* at *Harwich*, which reduces Clay and Wood into Stone, of which I should be glad of some particular account from you at your leisure: as also of the place where these are found, particularly how far the furthest from the Sea.